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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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INTRODUCTION

1. On 18 December 1992, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/148 by which, inter alia, it urged all Member States and regional and international organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, to provide support, as appropriate, to the establishment of the African Economic Community, and to assist in economic integration and cooperation in Africa, in particular by providing financial and technical assistance to African regional and subregional organizations, as well as to African organizations for drought and desertification control.

2. The General Assembly noted with appreciation the assistance provided by the United Nations and its organizations to the African countries in the context of the democratization process, as well as in organizing and holding pluralistic, free and fair elections, and encouraged the provision of such assistance to countries that requested it. It requested the United Nations to continue to support the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in its efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts and peacefully to manage change in Africa, and urged the United Nations to provide cooperation and assistance, as appropriate, to OAU should it decide to launch a peace-keeping operation.

3. By the same resolution, the General Assembly endorsed the agreement reached between the United Nations system and OAU on the convening of a meeting between the secretariats of the two organizations, to be held in 1993, to review and evaluate progress made in implementing the proposals and recommendations agreed upon in April 1991 and 1992 on cooperation between the two organizations in 1992-1993 and to adopt new and effective joint action.

4. The present report gives an account of the deliberations, conclusions and recommendations of the meeting between the secretariats of the United Nations system and OAU, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 8 to 10 September 1993.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

5. Following consultations at Addis Ababa and in New York between representatives of the two Secretariats, the following agenda for the meeting was agreed upon:

(a) Follow-up of the decisions and recommendations of the joint meeting between OAU and the United Nations, held from 2 to 4 April 1992 at Addis Ababa;

(b) Implementation of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (A/46/651, annex);

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations and OAU in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa;

(d) Cooperation between the United Nations and OAU in monitoring democratic change, including observing elections in Africa;

(e) Implementation of Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; 1/

(f) Implementation of the Consensus of Dakar adopted by the International Conference on Assistance to African Children;

(g) Implementation of United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF).

6. The following representatives from the United Nations system and OAU participated in the meeting:

A. General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity

B. United Nations

Department of Peace-keeping Operations of the Secretariat

Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat

Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat

United Nations Centre for Human Rights

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

World Food Programme (WFP)

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

B. Specialized agencies

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

World Health Organization (WHO)

7. The meeting was officially opened by Mr. James O. C. Jonah, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. It was also addressed by Ambassador Brownson Dede, Assistant Secretary-General of OAU for Economic Development and Cooperation.

8. In his statement, Mr. Jonah noted the decision reached by the two secretariats to expand the scope of their cooperation beyond the economic and social agenda which had hitherto defined their parameters in order to include new, important and timely topics of cooperation such as preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping, as well as democratization and elections. The decision reflected the positions of the United Nations and OAU that development was inextricably linked to peace and democracy and that democratic structures, popular participation and human rights were fundamental to the process of development. He stressed that regional cooperation held the key not only to economic and social progress but also to conflict resolution and democratic change.

9. Mr. Jonah drew attention to cooperation between the two organizations in facilitating and monitoring democratic change in Africa as a new and expanding area of cooperation. He observed that during the past two years alone, the United Nations had handled requests for electoral assistance from 27 African countries which constituted almost 80 per cent of all such requests. OAU too had been involved in election monitoring and observation in Africa, often in countries where the United Nations was also invited to participate in the process. He noted that it would be very important for the two organizations to explore ways and means of expanding their cooperation in this vital area.

10. On behalf of the Secretary-General of OAU, Ambassador Brownson N. Dede, Assistant Secretary-General of OAU, thanked the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his continued support of the programme of cooperation between the two institutions. Ambassador Dede paid tribute to the existing cooperation between OAU and other agencies of the United Nations system and especially to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ECA which were the most important partners of OAU in the building of the African Economic Community and in the area of regional integration and economic cooperation.

11. Ambassador Dede stressed the emerging similarities and complementarity of the agenda of OAU and that of the United Nations especially in the areas of conflict prevention, management and resolution; monitoring of electoral processes; and management of democratic change, as well as the problem of refugees and humanitarian assistance. Other areas of common interest where cooperation between OAU and the United Nations was important included the implementation of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, the Consensus of Dakar on Assistance to African Children, population issues and UN-NADAF. He concluded his remarks by calling upon participants to address the agenda items under discussion with a view to making concrete recommendations which would enhance cooperation between the United Nations and OAU.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Follow-up of the decisions and recommendations of the joint meeting between OAU and the United Nations, held at Addis Ababa from 2 to 4 April 1992

12. With regard to the follow-up of the decisions and recommendations of the meeting held in April 1992 between United Nations and OAU, the meeting held in September 1993 noted with satisfaction the ongoing cooperation between OAU and the organizations and agencies of the United Nations. After exchanging views on the activities carried out by the United Nations organizations and agencies and by OAU, the meeting agreed on the following:

(a) An appropriate follow-up arrangement within the United Nations system of organizations and agencies, which would ensure implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of OAU policy organs;

(b) Closer cooperation between OAU and United Nations organizations and agencies in order to exchange information in technical and operational areas;

(c) Continued cooperation in order to implement the OAU resolution adopted by the OAU Heads of State and Government at its twenty-ninth ordinary session, on the AIDS epidemic in Africa; resolution AHG/Res.224 (XXIX) on the African Regional Food and Nutrition Strategy; as well as OAU Council resolution 1253 (LI) on the International Decade for National Disaster Reduction in Africa;

(d) Support for OAU in building up a database on political, sociocultural and technological information, in order to enhance its capacity in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

13. The meeting also agreed that African Governments should be commended for the continuing generous asylum policy they have upheld to date, so also should the efforts under way between the secretariats of OAU and UNHCR to develop a framework for model national legislation on refugees. It stressed the paramount responsibility of OAU member States in facilitating access to victims in conflict areas and improving security conditions for relief workers, in order to ensure the safe and rapid delivery of humanitarian assistance. It underlined the importance of the adoption of a code of conduct to govern the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance. Recognizing the close linkage between mass movements and poverty, the meeting emphasized the need to enhance durable solutions to facilitate the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons in conditions of safety and dignity.

B. Implementation of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community

14. In connection with the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, the meeting, taking into account resolution CM/Res.1406 (LVI) of June 1992, adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers agreed that:

(a) Joint action should be undertaken by OAU and the United Nations system to publicize the Treaty in order to popularize it at the national, regional and international levels;

(b) The organizations and agencies of the United Nations system should include in their national and regional programmes the activities which would enhance regional cooperation and integration in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Treaty;

(c) The organizations and agencies of the United Nations system should endeavour, in their regional programmes in Africa, to establish linkages among them so as to ensure the consistency of their programmes with those of the African Economic Community and other regional economic communities;

(d) The organizations and agencies of the United Nations system should continue to provide the necessary support in the carrying out of studies and preparation of protocols on the African Economic Community;

(e) OAU and the relevant United Nations organizations and agencies should work together on the possible implications of the Treaty on the free movement of persons within the African Economic Community, with particular reference to refugees and displaced persons;

(f) OAU and ILO should intensify their cooperation within the framework of the OAU Labour Commission, which has become a full-fledged tripartite body.

C. Cooperation in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa

Introduction

15. The United Nations and OAU have a long-standing relationship in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking in Africa. The Secretaries-General of the two organizations consult frequently and regularly on key African issues with a view to coordinating their initiatives and actions in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa.

16. During the period under review, the two Organizations have cooperated in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking in South Africa, Somalia, Liberia and Rwanda, among others. In South Africa, the observer missions deployed by the two organizations are cooperating closely in efforts to facilitate the reduction of political violence and the democratization process in the country. Early in 1992, the two organizations, with the cooperation of others, succeeded in bringing the warring factions in Mogadishu to sign a cease-fire agreement. Currently, the two organizations are assessing the scope and modalities of cooperation in peacemaking and peace-keeping efforts in Liberia and Rwanda.

17. The interrelationship between human rights, democracy, security, stability and development in Africa necessitates effective cooperative action between the United Nations and OAU. In this regard, the Agenda for Peace 2/ provides both organizations with the opportunity to render great service in a manner

consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and that of OAU.

18. In the Agenda for Peace, the United Nations Secretary-General stressed the importance of the contribution which regional organizations can make in preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. Increased cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in these processes would contribute to a deeper sense of regional participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs.

19. In the African context, OAU brings to its partnership with the United Nations its political salience as the pre-eminent, regional organization in Africa. At the same time, OAU recognizes that the United Nations has primary responsibility for international peace and security and that it is endowed with greater material and financial resources. The OAU advantage in conflict resolution includes:

(a) Its close proximity to conflict situations;

(b) Its innate knowledge of local African conflict situations;

(c) The shared historical experience and culture of its member States;

(d) The political will to resolve its own problems.

20. On numerous occasions, the United Nations and OAU have called for strengthening of their cooperative relationship in the various aspects of peace-building. The organizations recognize that the time has come for concrete actions to enhance their cooperation efforts.

Recommendations for concrete action

21. In the light of the above, it is recommended that the updated 1990 Cooperation Agreement between the United Nations and OAU should be amended, or a supplementary agreement on conflict management and conflict resolution should be concluded, by the United Nations and OAU.

22. In the area of preventive diplomacy, the following action is recommended:

(a) The United Nations should assist in the establishment within OAU of an early warning system based on the model now being developed by the United Nations;

(b) The organizations should develop joint training programmes for United Nations and OAU staff on the settlement of disputes. In this regard, it is recognized that the United Nations would bring greater technical and financial resources to the development and running of such training programmes;

(c) The United Nations should provide technical assistance to OAU to help the organization develop its capacity for confidence building between its member States;

(d) The United Nations and OAU should intensify their cooperation in encouraging the process of democratization in Africa. In particular, they should strengthen the transmission of information with regard to electoral assistance activities and, where appropriate, OAU should be encouraged to participate in the international observation of elections by providing representative observers;

(e) The United Nations should provide technical assistance to OAU to help the organization encourage its member States to create public knowledge of human rights and to support the programme of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights;

(f) The United Nations should enhance its coordination and consultation by intensifying the exchange of information, especially through the Permanent Observer Mission of OAU to the United Nations in New York and between the Special Representatives of OAU and the United Nations in various African countries;

(g) The United Nations should help to mobilize the financial and technical support necessary to build the institutional capacity of the OAU secretariat in conflict prevention and conflict management, especially through UNDP and the specialized agencies.

23. In the areas of peacemaking and peace-keeping, it is recommended that:

(a) The organizations should engage in regular joint activities regarding peacemaking and peace-keeping in Africa, especially through OAU involvement with, and participation in, United Nations missions;

(b) In such cases where OAU undertakes peace-keeping activities, such as cease-fire observations, the United Nations should provide technical assistance to OAU to help it carry out such activities successfully;

(c) The United Nations should help to mobilize financial and logistic support to specific peacemaking and peace-keeping activities of OAU;

(d) The United Nations should assist OAU in organizing training programmes for military contingents from its member States that may participate in United Nations peace-keeping activities.

24. The following is recommended for post-conflict peace-building:

OAU and the United Nations agencies should cooperate closely in post-conflict peace-building activities, especially the rehabilitation of infrastructure in social and economic sectors. This would include special emphasis in the first stages, on the needs of refugees, displaced persons, demobilized combatants and other war-affected persons.

D. Cooperation in monitoring democratic change including election monitoring in Africa

1. Introduction

25. The monitoring of democratic change, with particular attention to electoral observation, is a relatively new field of cooperation for OAU and the United Nations. The primary impetus for United Nations activity has been the increasing number of requests received from Member States, beginning in the late 1980s, for various types of electoral assistance. OAU established electoral observation as a priority following a Declaration issued by OAU heads of State and Government in July 1990 (A/45/482, annex II), which reaffirmed the right of African States to decide which forms of democratic Government might be most appropriate for them, given existing sociocultural values and current social and economic realities.

26. OAU and the United Nations have already established effective cooperation in this field. The United Nations focal point for electoral assistance is Mr. James O. C. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Under his guidance, the Electoral Assistance Unit coordinates United Nations electoral assistance activities in three primary areas: (a) exchange of information among organizations and institutions involved in electoral assistance; (b) technical assistance; and (c) electoral observation. Although OAU and the United Nations have cooperated in these areas, opportunities exist to expand and strengthen that working relationship.

2. Recommendations for concrete action

(a) Exchange of information and training

27. OAU is already a member of the Electoral Assistance Information Network established in October 1992 and coordinated by the United Nations Electoral Assistance Unit. The United Nations and OAU should ensure appropriate consultation and exchange of information with regard to electoral assistance and democratic transition activities; consideration might be given to the organization of relevant and specific training programmes on aspects of democratic transition; and OAU might assist in identifying experts on issues of democratic transition and electoral processes whose names might be referred to the Electoral Assistance Unit for inclusion on a roster of experts.

(b) Technical assistance

28. The United Nations provides various forms of technical assistance, including advice, financing and electoral materials. OAU members wishing such assistance or interested in contributing towards such assistance in other countries should direct their requests to the United Nations focal point for electoral assistance. Further consultations and/or missions to assess needs may be initiated on that basis.

(c) Electoral observation

29. OAU and the United Nations system have already cooperated effectively in the observation of elections, most recently in Eritrea and Malawi. The United Nations would welcome greater participation by OAU in international observer groups organized for such observations.

E. Implementation of Agenda 21 on Environment and Development

Introduction

30. The meeting recalled that in the wake of the previous annual meeting between the United Nations system and OAU (held at Addis Ababa in April 1992), there was concerted collaborative effort in the finalization and harmonization of the African common position on environment and development, which was submitted to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development by OAU.

31. In view of the fact that the decisions of the Conference 1/ added new dimensions to the cooperative relationship of the United Nations and OAU and also opened a new avenue for further collaboration, the OAU Council of Ministers adopted resolution CM/1409 (LVI), by which it, inter alia, expressed gratitude to the United Nations system notably ECA, UNDP, the United Nations Sahelian Office (UNSO) and UNEP for their efforts; called upon the OAU secretariat and concerned organizations to undertake the necessary measures to organize in Africa the follow up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; requested the OAU Secretary-General in collaboration with UNSO, UNEP and other interested United Nations institutions to give full support to Africa within the framework of negotiations for an international convention to combat desertification; and requested OAU in cooperation with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and United Nations institutions particularly UNEP, UNSO and UNDP to ensure the mobilization of the necessary resources for the implementation of Agenda 21.

32. In furtherance of the objectives of the above resolution, the OAU secretariat and the United Nations system encouraged and stimulated a wide range of follow-up actions involving African organizations, OAU member States and United Nations agencies culminating, inter alia, in:

(a) The establishment of an OAU ad hoc group of experts charged with the responsibility of preparing a consolidated document on Africa's inputs to the proposed international convention to combat desertification. The document has now been submitted to the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and will serve as a working document for its second session. A number of United Nations agencies continue to provide technical and financial support, as well as advisory service, to the ad hoc group of experts and the African group as a whole;

(b) High-level subregional and regional consultations, including ministerial meetings, on strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21 and related decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and

Development 1/ in which the OAU secretariat, United Nations agencies and African organizations played key or lead roles;

(c) Greater awareness of the implications to Africa of the agreements of the Conference.

33. The meeting noted that the United Nations agencies have undertaken or are undertaking necessary measures to implement support programmes in Africa within the framework of the agreements of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, notably Agenda 21. High priority is being given to working closely with the OAU secretariat in assisting African countries within the framework of the conventions on biological diversity and climate change, as well as with regard to negotiations for the international convention to combat desertification and the restructuring of the Global Environmental Facility; and in facilitating a review of capacity-building requirements of OAU member countries.

Priorities for action

34. The meeting noted that OAU resolution CM/1409 (LVI) on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (see A/47/558, annex I) and resolution CM/1462 (LVIII) on the International Convention on the Control of Desertification in Countries Affected by Drought provided, inter alia, significant opportunities for continued cooperation between the United Nations and OAU in support of the follow-up action on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development by Africa. Such action needs to be taken within a close partnership, by concentrating on:

(a) Programmes dealing with the social and economic dimensions of Agenda 21, as well as the conservation and the management of natural resources;

(b) Continued advisory services, as well as technical and financial assistance of the joint secretariat on Africa to the Conference (comprised of OAU, ECA, UNSO, UNDP, UNEP and AfDB);

(c) Providing full support to the OAU ad hoc group of experts, as well as the African group, in the negotiations for an international convention to combat desertification;

(d) Measures to organize in Africa the follow-up and coordination of the implementation of all the agreements of the Conference, including Habitat II;

(e) Mobilization of resources for the implementation of Agenda 21 and related decisions of the Conference;

(f) Assistance to African countries to facilitate their participation in all international and regional conventions as well as global negotiations, such as the Global Environmental Facility, the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and any further negotiations on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests;

(g) Formulation and implementation of national, subregional and regional strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21;

(h) Capacity-building programmes at the national, subregional and regional levels;

(i) Provision of necessary support to follow-up action by Africa in the wake of the Conference, through the United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, as well as institutions such as the AfDB, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Conference of Ministers for Economic Planning and Development;

(j) Supporting and strengthening the role of major groups in the implementation of Agenda 21 and other decisions of the Conference;

(k) Measures and arrangements for effectively addressing the region's disaster preparedness;

(l) ILO projects relating to the working environment;

(m) Protocol on the environment of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (A/46/651, annex).

35. Finally, the meeting recommended that appropriate measures should be taken or mechanisms should be identified jointly by the United Nations system and the OAU secretariat for monitoring implementation by Africa of the decisions of the Conference; and fulfilment by the international community of the commitments and undertakings made at the Conference.

F. Implementation of the Consensus of Dakar adopted by the International Conference on Assistance to African Children

Introduction

36. Following the interventions of both OAU and UNICEF, the meeting noted with satisfaction the results of the International Conference on Assistance to African Children, held at Dakar from 25 to 27 November 1992, which was convened in close cooperation between the two organizations. The Conference produced a number of significant results including the adoption of the Consensus of Dakar and the Plan of Action for its implementation. Those two documents were subsequently adopted by the meeting of the OAU Council of Ministers (CM/Res.1464 (LVIII)) and endorsed by the OAU Heads of State and Government at Cairo in June 1993.

Priorities for action

37. While recognizing that the Governments concerned are the principal actors, a number of actions and measures are required on the part of OAU and the United Nations system, in concert with other partners, to support achievement of the objectives of the International Conference held at Dakar. These include:

(a) Establishment of a monitoring mechanism for implementing the recommendations of the Consensus of Dakar;

(b) Support for the achievement by the end of 1995 of the mid-decade goals enumerated in the Consensus of Dakar, namely, with regard to immunization levels, usage of oral rehydration therapy, the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders and vitamin A deficiency, the encouragement of breast-feeding and ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

(c) Preparation of a comprehensive report on the successes and failures in dealing with infant mortality in Africa;

(d) Implementation of water supply programmes for children, in line with national action plans and with Agenda 21;

(e) Undertaking awareness programmes involving OAU member countries and non-governmental organizations, based on the social, economic and cultural realities in which the African child grows;

(f) Implementation of measures to address issues of teenage pregnancy, including promotion of a balanced and adequate education for teenage mothers and the organization of a regional symposium on these issues;

(g) Case studies on children in especially difficult circumstances, especially those in conflict situations, as well as children who are refugees or have been displaced;

(h) Implementation of the resolution adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers on the International Conference on Assistance to African Children (CM/Res.1464 (LVIII)), within the framework of the ILO International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour;

(i) Convening of a regional conference on youth, in commemoration of the end of the International Youth Year (1985);

(j) Carrying out of studies on the abuse of drugs by children in cooperation with the relevant United Nations organizations and agencies and the organization of seminars to highlight the plight of street and delinquent children and those who are victims of drugs. The seminars could provide a forum for assessing the impact of these problems on society;

(k) Providing support for an African institute for the rehabilitation of handicapped and retarded children.

G. Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF)

38. With regard to the implementation of UN-NADAF, the meeting noted the ongoing activities by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations and welcomed the establishment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the Panel of High Level Personalities, which he chaired. The meeting stressed that:

(a) Additional resources which were called for under UN-NADAF should be made available to support economic development in Africa;

(b) Resources initially intended for long-term development should not be used for emergency situations. Also, bilateral and multilateral financial resources should be directed to certain important sectors, as identified in UN-NADAF;

(c) OAU and the United Nations should call for an improvement of the international economic environment to facilitate Africa's economic recovery and development, and to address the questions of external debt, resources flows, commodities, market access and terms of trade.

Notes

1/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution I, annexes I-III.

2/ A/47/277-S/24111; see Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-seventh Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1992, document S/24111.